

Dear Jim,

6/29/84

My inability to recall clearly whether disclosures of CIA wiretapping in Mexico City included the USSR has bothered me. I thought about it last night before falling asleep and evolved another possibility. I also then recalled I'd said something ambiguous and want to eliminate the ambiguity. This first.

Phillips was in charge of Cuban operations, not surveillances. But all of the surveillances that contained Cuban information ^{was} ~~was~~ routed to him because he was in charge of that area. He was not in charge of surveillances of the USSR.

I've checked the pages of the transcript that I copied and, interestingly, indirectly he confirmed that there were USSR surveillances. He was asked (p. 317), "Did you have any authority over surveillance of the Embassy of the Soviet Union in Mexico City?" The special assistant to the DC USA, Lee Strickland, interrupted at this point and not to claim that such surveillances might not be disclosed or confirmed but to ask, "Is the question did he have authority such as was it within his duties?" Wulf said, "Yes," after which Phillips stated, "The answer is no."

But he was "in charge of surveillance of the Cuban embassy." (p. 313) Asked "Did you see any evidence of Lee Harvey Oswald entering the Cuban embassy at any time in 1963?" He responded, "Yes, I did." (p. 314) What evidence did he see? "Evidence in the form of reports (emphasis added) from a Cuban embassy source that he was inside." (p. 315)

So, there was more than one report on LHO inside the Cuban embassy. I think it is not likely that a wiretap or transcription of any wiretap could or would be described as providing reports or as a Cuban embassy source.

He was asked (35), "While you were employed at the CIA did you ever see any documents which contained Lee Harvey Oswald's name?" He replied that he had, when he was stationed in Mexico City, and when asked "What kind of documents" these were he answered "Transcripts of conversations ~~in which Lee Harvey Oswald participated before the assassination, obviously, and one of the documents was a memorandum from the CIA station to other elements of the U.S. Embassy describing the fact that he was in Mexico City.~~" (36). asked what these conversations concerned, as I understand the ambiguous question, he said, "It concerned his contacts with the Cuban and Soviet embassies." (36)

Wulf came back to this (on 36) and referred not to conversations but to meetings or visits and Phillips corrected him to say he had not said meetings or visits but conversations. He was then asked "Conversations with personnel from those two embassies?" and he said "Yes." (36) But it gets ambiguous again when Wulf asked if "the documents you saw contained descriptions of those conversations," to which Phillips again said, "Yes." I wonder if he could have been referring to the transcripts as containing "descriptions of such conversations" or, what appears to be more likely, that reports, in the plural because the question was about documents, in the plural, contained these descriptions.

I thought about the foregoing in relationship to the national security claim made to withhold the transcripts by the FBI, and the teletyped paraphrase and came to believe, assuming that there is some basis for the bi claim, that the withheld information thus has to confirm previously unconfirmed surveillances. If not previously confirmed, this could be the wiretapping of the Soviets. But it also could be bugging. Only bugging of the Cubans would not in itself disclose the Soviet end of the conversations. But Soviet bugging along with Cuban wiretapping could disclose both ends. If not previously disclosed I believe this does: disclose electronic surveillance of the Soviet embassy and, if the wiretapping had been disclosed earlier, then the bugging would have been admitted. I also believe that the strong efforts made by the CIA and USA representatives with regard to the source inside the Cuban embassy was to befuddle the fact that a live source was what Phillips testified to.